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CREATION AND DESTRUCTION:
MITCHELL/GIURGOLA'S LIBERTY BELL PAVILION

Bradley David Roeder

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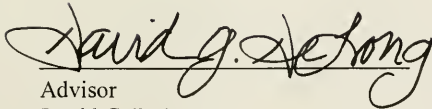
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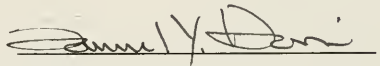
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Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

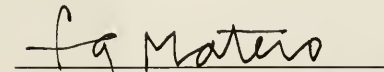
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people, through their time and advice, have made this paper possible. Foremost among these is my thesis advisor, David G. DeLong. His direction, diplomacy, editorial input, and enthusiasm were invaluable to this paper's completion. I am grateful to him for his understanding and swift responses when a fractured hand delayed the process for almost a month. I am also thankful to my reader, Samuel Y. Harris, for his valuable views on the topic and quick editorial turnaround.

In regards to those who assisted me in the research portion of this paper, I would foremost like thank all the individuals who took time from their busy schedules to speak with me about the Liberty Bell Pavilion. I would like to extend a special thanks to David Hollenberg of the National Park Service and John Q. Lawson for speaking with me at length about the building. Their input was indispensable to gaining an understanding of the park's role and the driving forces behind the design of the pavilion. I would also like to thank Julia Moore Converse and William Whitaker of the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania for granting me unfettered access to the building's original construction drawings. The suggestions made by George E. Thomas in regards to locating sources, as well as his general support were much appreciated. Frank G. Matero's enthusiasm for this topic kept me moving forward on several occasions. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the aforementioned William Whitaker for his inspirational suggestion of the Liberty Bell Pavilion as an ideal thesis topic.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

For over twenty-five years, the Liberty Bell Pavilion in Philadelphia has housed the most recognized relic from the United States' colonial and Revolutionary era. This pavilion, an excellent example of modern architecture designed by Ehrman Mitchell and Romaldo Giurgola in 1975, has ushered over 40 million visitors from all over the world



Figure 1: Liberty Bell Pavilion as seen from Market Street with Penn Mutual Tower and Penn Mutual Life Insurance Building in the background.

to view this symbol of the country's illustrious beginning. Built to efficiently maximize the circulation of large numbers of people, the building has performed admirably. In addition to this basic element of the program, the building, through its siting on Independence Mall, visually connects the bell to Independence Hall and the surrounding historic structures and makes this national treasure available for all to see, all of the time.

The National Park Service, to better handle the millions of visitors expected to visit Philadelphia and the bell in connection with America's bicentennial in 1976, commissioned the construction of the Liberty Bell Pavilion. At the time of the commission, Mitchell/Giurgola Associates was a leading firm in the country. With many significant commissions, including the Wright Brothers Memorial Visitors Center for the Park Service and Columbus East High School, completed at the time of the Pavilion commission, the firm was widely respected within the profession. Based in Philadelphia and a foremost member of the Philadelphia School of architecture, combined with the firm's successful Park Service experience, the selection of Mitchell/Giurgola for the project was sound and practical. The Liberty Bell was transferred to its new home on January 1, 1976; though criticized by the popular media, the Pavilion was widely acclaimed within the profession as a successful design. This praise lasted for many years until fashions began to shift away from modernism and postmodernism became a dominant mode of design.

The Pavilion commission was only one aspect of a larger plan to ready Independence National Historic Park for the celebration. Now, as the new millennium begins, a new plan for the park has been created by the Park Service that will again result in the construction of new buildings on Independence Mall. One of these new buildings is a new home for the Liberty Bell, a few feet away from the Mitchell/Giurgola-designed Pavilion. When the construction of the new Liberty Bell Center is complete in 2003, the current pavilion will be demolished and its site re-landscaped.

Despite the significant architectural design of the building and its continued use for almost thirty years, there has been no significant outcry, public, professional, or otherwise, against what may be viewed as its premature demise. The National Park Service has no plans to preserve the building in any form. The Pavilion will be demolished in 2003 and will only live on in pictures and in the memories of over 40 million people.

This is not the only significant post-World War II building under the National Park Service's stewardship that is threatened with demolition. The Cyclorama Building by Richard Neutra at the Gettysburg Historic Site, one of the buildings built in the 1950s and '60s during the Park Service's Mission 66 agenda, is also slated for demolition. While this building's fate has given rise to a significant public objection, led by the son of one of the building's associated architects, the building's future remains bleak. Why

do buildings of this era seem to consistently be in such danger? Is it because they do not fit in with the Park Service's current vision of park management? Are they under appreciated among the general public and within the profession because of current popular styles in architecture? Since almost all of these buildings fall short of the 50-year mark required to be deemed historic, are they simply just not significant enough?

Though the answers to these questions would be useful in an appraisal of the current climate for survival of buildings of this period, the time for wondering why in regards to the Liberty Bell Pavilion may have passed. The imperative question for the Pavilion is what happens now? Is demolition the only answer? Buildings many times the size and weight of the Pavilion are moved on a fairly regular basis. In regards to the significance of site to the historical significance of a structure, the Pavilion *was* designed for its site and surroundings, but does that mean that no other site and no other function would be suitable or feasible? These questions must be answered to determine whether alternatives to demolition of the Pavilion are possible.

The goal of this paper is to both review the history of the Liberty Bell Pavilion and to attempt to understand the circumstances surrounding its imminent demolition. Once these issues are understood, then perhaps the legacy of the building in regards to other threatened buildings of this era can be understood. The information necessary for a comprehensive understanding of this topic will be obtained through research gathered in

several ways. Interviews with significant figures will be performed to better understand the history of both Independence National Historical Park and the Liberty Bell Pavilion. National Park Service documents will be reviewed to comprehend both the historical and physical context of the pavilion. Local newspapers will be researched in order to understand the views of the media and the general public on pertinent events that have occurred during the life of the pavilion. Similarly, architectural trade journals will be explored to understand the viewpoints of the profession at the time of the building's construction as well as demolition. Finally, in addition to secondary sources on pertinent topics, the original design and construction drawings of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania will be studied to better understand the building itself. The information gained from this variety of sources will help to inform a complete narrative of the Liberty Bell Pavilion's creation and destruction from which the answers to the questions above can be obtained.



Figure 2: Interior View of The Liberty Bell Pavilion.

CHAPTER II

Origins

The Liberty Bell

Before discussing Mitchell/Giurgola's Liberty Bell Pavilion, a brief look at the history of the bell may be beneficial to a later understanding of how the building's design suited its sole tenant so well. Cast in the eighteenth century, the bell's role through American history, both actual and assigned, illustrates the eventual need for the twentieth century reliquary.

In 1751, the Pennsylvania Assembly ordered the Superintendents of the Pennsylvania State House to commission the casting of a bell to hang in the recently completed tower and steeple in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of William Penn's Charter of Privileges.¹ As with many items of this time, the bell was ordered from England and was cast in 1752 by Lister & Cist of Whitechapel at the request of Isaac Norris. Norris was the head of the State House Superintendents who were charged with the maintenance of the building and supervision of additional construction. It was Norris who called for the date of casting and the biblical verse, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof," to be cast onto the bell.² The bell was brought to Philadelphia by ship, but upon its first trial it cracked. Original plans were to return

¹ Theodore Thayer, "Town into City," *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Wiegley (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 68.

² Victor Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell: Its History and Significance* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), 7-8, 17-18.

the bell to the foundry to be recast. Due to unavoidable shipping delays, a pair of Philadelphians, John Pass and Charles Stow, Jr., attempted to cast a satisfactory bell in Philadelphia in the interim. The text on the new bell differed from the English bell only in a change of the foundry's mark and date of casting: 1753. However, this bell cracked upon the first test ringing as well and Pass and Stow quickly melted it down and recast another.³ During this time, the original bell from England was shipped back; Lister & Cist cast a new bell, and this second English bell had arrived in Philadelphia. Pass & Stow's new bell, though not ideal in tone, compared favorably to the second English bell and both bells were kept. The Lister & Cist bell was hung in the State House cupola belfry while the Pass & Stow bell was raised to the new steeple tower.⁴ [Figures 3, 4]

By this time in the 1760s, the structural integrity of the wooden steeple was in question due to problems of rot and weathering. The stress to the steeple's structure, caused by the vibrations of the Pass & Stow bell when it was rung, was cause for alarm. It was for this reason that the English bell in the cupola performed the striking of the hour, marked by the State House clock. The Pass & Stow bell was used to call Assembly meetings to order, to notify the town of important events, and to ring, for a fee, for Philadelphia institutions that did not possess a bell of their own.⁵ Among the important events that the American bell called to the attention of Philadelphians during colonial times was a muted ringing for the enactment of the Stamp Act, the notice of the approach

³ Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell*, 10-11, 15-17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*

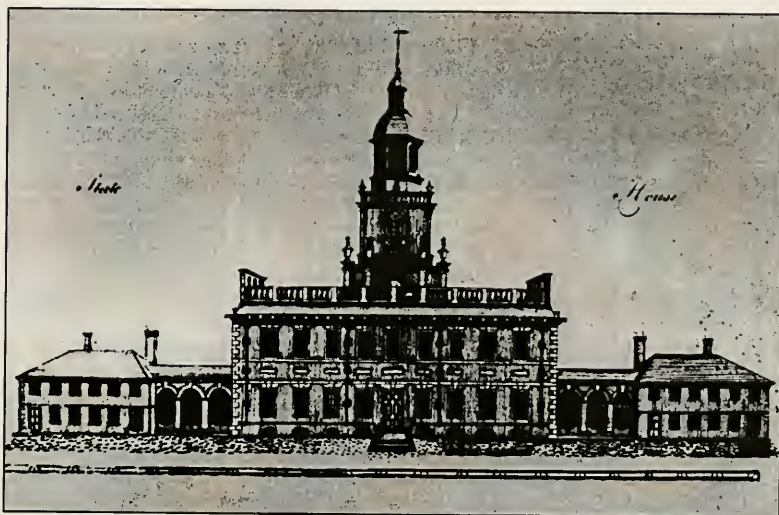


Figure 3: The original State House steeple in 1776, where the Pass & Stow bell was hung.



Figure 4: An 1800 engraving of Independence Hall by W. Birch & Son. The belfry where the English bell was hung is located on the main roof of the Hall, north of the brick tower.

of the British vessel carrying the heavily taxed shipment of tea, and most importantly to call the city's citizens to the State House yard (Independence Square) to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776.⁶

After being removed to safety in Allentown during the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777-1778, the American bell was returned to the State House steeple. Finally in 1781, after years of concern, the wooden steeple was removed from the State House and the bell was hung from the hipped roof built over the remaining brick tower.⁷ [Figure 4] The bell, now widely known as the Bell of Independence, continued to ring in welcome for visiting dignitaries, to celebrate the birthdays of great men such as George Washington, and to mourn the deaths of America's and Philadelphia's heroes. Following the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette in 1824, a move began to restore what by then was known as Independence Hall. Part of this restoration by William Strickland involved the reconstruction of the hall's wooden steeple.⁸ With the completion of Strickland's steeple, a new and larger bell was acquired and hung in the steeple while the Liberty Bell continued to hang within the upper levels of the tower. The reason for this is attributed to perceivable faults in the Liberty Bell that might have caused further damage. The English bell, which had been used to strike the hour, was then donated to St. Augustine's Catholic Church on Fourth Street. That bell remained there until the church burned in

⁶Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell*, 36-38, 57-58.

⁷Edward M. Riley, *Independence National Historic Park*, (Washington D. C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service), 53.

⁸Riley, *Independence*, 41.

1844 and the bell was destroyed in the blaze.⁹ Regardless of the existence of a new bell in the steeple, the Liberty Bell did continue to be rung on special occasions. The bell sounded a muted death knell for Chief Justice John Marshall on July 8, 1835 when it cracked. Thereafter occasionally rung despite its compromised tone, the bell's crack worsened while ringing in celebration of Washington's birthday in 1843. At this point the bell was retired until the approach of Washington's birthday in 1846 caused the Assembly to have the crack drilled out in an effort to restore its tone. However, upon ringing, the crack proceeded up the entire length of the bell to its crown and the bell was permanently retired.¹⁰

While there was some discussion of melting down the bell and recasting it, no action was taken and the bell remained mute in the Hall's tower. It is in this period that the bell began to gain its legendary status as an American icon. In 1839 an abolitionist group named the American Anti-Slavery Society published a pamphlet entitled *The Liberty Bell*¹¹ under the name "Friends of Freedom" in which it drew attention to the biblical verse cast on the bell. This is the first known reference to the bell as the Liberty Bell.¹²

⁹ Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell*, 22.

¹⁰ Riley, *Independence*, 53.

Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell*, 97-99, 102.

¹¹ Friends of Freedom, *The Liberty Bell* (Boston: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839).

¹² Riley, *Independence*, 53-58.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the bell became the subject of many fictionalized retellings of Revolution-period history. This practice of couching fiction in an historical context was characteristic of a school of writers practicing in the early nineteenth century. One writer that was influenced by this method was George Lippard of Philadelphia. Lippard wrote a number of historical novels, but perhaps his most famous, *Legends of the American Revolution*, was first published in 1847.¹³ In this book, a chapter named “The Fourth of July, 1776” told the story of an old man waiting in the State House steeple for word from his grandson on the second Continental Congress’ decision regarding the Declaration of Independence. According to Lippard’s story, upon passage of the Declaration, the boy ran onto Chestnut Street and shouted up to his grandfather to ring the bell, upon which the man rang the Liberty Bell repeatedly. Such stories of the bell became widely known and often thought to be true. [Figure 5] One historian of the time, Benson J. Lossing, told a version of Lippard’s story in his widely read work, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*, and related it as fact.¹⁴ The dissemination of such stories as fact helped to spread the legend of the bell and national interest in it continued to increase.

By 1852, in an effort to bring the bell into public view, the relic was brought down from the tower to the assembly room of Independence Hall and placed on a specially

¹³ George Lippard, *Legends of the American Revolution “1776” or, Washington and His Generals* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1876).
Rosewater, *Liberty Bell*, 112.

¹⁴ Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855).
Rosewater, *Liberty Bell*, 119.



Figure 5: Illustration of the legend of the bell ringer and his grandson.

made pedestal. The bell remained in the hall, whether in the assembly room, Supreme Court chamber, or the tower stairwell, for the next thirty years. The Liberty Bell was heavily visited during the American Centennial of 1876, which sparked widespread awareness and adoration of the artifact.¹⁵ This tremendous popularity and rise in patriotism caused other cities in America to begin to ask that the bell be brought to

¹⁵ Riley, *Independence*, 53-58.

various locations for a number of expositions and celebrations. The first such trip for the bell was the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition in New Orleans in 1885. Over the following thirty years, the bell made seven trips outside of Philadelphia to locations as distant as San Francisco in 1915. On every trip, the bell was met with throngs of enthusiastic onlookers both at its destination and along its route. Such frequent transportation of the bell, however, lengthened the crack over time and the City of Philadelphia decided that the Liberty Bell would remain in Philadelphia and no longer be moved out of the city.¹⁶ The bell was then placed in the stairwell of Independence Hall and made available for viewing by the general public,

During the first half of the twentieth century, the bell was occasionally called into service to commemorate important events. Upon completion of the first transcontinental telephone exchange in 1915, the first message to travel from Philadelphia to San Francisco was the sound of the Liberty Bell being tapped with a wooden mallet. In an effort to increase subscription to the Liberty Loan during the first World War, the first American war bonds fund drive, the bell was placed on a truck and transported around Philadelphia. The effort was successful and the city's subscriptions to the loan increased dramatically.¹⁷ [Figure 6] After this excursion in 1917, the bell remained in Independence Hall until it was moved to the recently completed Liberty Bell Pavilion in 1976.

¹⁶ Rosewater, *The Liberty Bell*, 225.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179, 189-190.



Figure 6: The Liberty Bell as patriotic symbol in a poster for war bonds in World War I.

While housed in Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell was displayed in many different fashions. After the bell's removal from the tower in 1852, it was placed on a specially made pedestal with thirteen sides. A few years later, the bell was displayed with its yoke and timber framing that had been found in the tower. Since the framing

largely obscured the bell and its inscription, the bell was removed from its yoke and framing and hung on a chain in the stair tower in anticipation of the crowds visiting Philadelphia during the nation's centennial. The bell remained in this state until 1895 when the desire for closer viewing caused the bell and its yoke to be placed on a bronze support in a case of glass and carved wood in the stair tower. The bell remained in this case until 1915 when the wood and glass case was removed to allow visitors to touch the bell.¹⁸ The bell remained on its bronze support in the stair tower until it was moved to the Mitchell/Giurgola-designed pavilion.

As mentioned above, abolitionists of the nineteenth century adopted the Liberty Bell as a symbol of the anti-slavery movement. Since that time a number of groups have followed this example and assembled around the bell in public protest. As well as a freedom from slavery, the Liberty Bell has been used to symbolize a freedom to vote, especially during the women's suffrage movement of the early twentieth century. A replica of the Liberty Bell was cast in 1915 with its clapper held by a chain. The bell was toured throughout Pennsylvania and suffragettes encouraged voters to approve the women's suffrage amendment.¹⁹ [Figure 7] The Liberty Bell is also often used as a gathering place for demonstrators. In a demonstration calling for "human rights," protestors gathered around the bell to speak out against anti-illegal immigration laws

¹⁸ Riley, *Independence*, 58.

¹⁹ John C. Paige, *The Liberty Bell of Independence National Historical Park: A Special History Study* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service), 130-131.

In an admirable act of diplomacy, the superintendent of Independence National Historical Park at the time, Hobart G. Cawood, persuaded the Queen of England to donate a bicentennial bell to the United States as a gift from the British people. The new bell would be placed in the visitor center's tower in the Liberty Bell's stead.⁴¹

However, the problem of the new location for the Liberty Bell was not solved and the situation was debated during much of 1972 and 1973 at meetings of the advisory commission for Independence National Historical Park. Aside from the visitor center, a possible location for the bell was the center of Independence Square. Judge Lewis was a strong proponent of a bombproof structure in the center of the square where the statue of Commodore Barry sat. Barry, the father of the U.S. Navy, was of Irish descent and objections by Irish members of the advisory commission as well as representatives of Philadelphia's Irish community rendered the site untenable due to political pressures. There was also concern that placing the bell in Independence Square would not draw visitors far enough away from the hall and into the rest of the park. Further debate and consultation between the commission, the Park Service, and Philadelphia mayor Frank Rizzo finally decided that the bell should be moved to the first block of the mall.⁴²

Though the decision of where the Liberty Bell would be located was made, one problem remained. The National Park Service did not own any of the land within the

⁴¹ John Q. Lawson, interview by author, Philadelphia, Pa., 22 January 2002.

⁴² Greiff, *Independence*, 228-229.

Independence National Historical Park

In the early part of the twentieth century, the city of Philadelphia and the federal government began to consider ways to preserve Independence Hall and its surroundings. The result of these efforts was Independence National Historical Park. A park of forty-five acres, it was a highly contentious undertaking that to this day sparks intense discussion among those who have an interest in the portrayal of America's heritage. It is within this park that Mitchell/Giurgola's Liberty Bell Pavilion would be sited.

Decades before the creation of Independence Mall in 1949, the block opposite Independence Hall had been considered for development. In 1915, two architects, Albert Kelsey and D. Knickerbacker Boyd, proposed a scheme for a "reviewing square" in front of Independence Hall. Conceived in the Beaux-Arts manner popular at the time, the Kelsey and Boyd plan occupied the southern half of the block opposite the Hall, extending from Chestnut Street to what was then Ludlow Street. The two architects, in addition to their design, outlined four objectives of clearing an area on the north side of the hall: "creating a fitting setting for Independence Hall, reducing the fire hazard, reducing congestion and beautifying the entire quadrant of the city."²¹ These objectives would influence not only the 1950s plan for the mall, but they remain relevant for the current plans for the mall. Following the Kelsey and Boyd plan, Jacques Greber and Paul Phillipe Cret, in 1924 and 1928 respectively, would produce designs of a similar scope.

²¹ George L. Caflan, Jr., "Framing Independence Hall," *Places* 13, no. 3 (2000): 63.

In 1937, Roy Larson, who was involved with previous approaches for the space, put forth a program of greatly increased scope. Larson's plan hinged on the effect of linking Independence Hall and Cret's Benjamin Franklin Bridge, completed in 1926. Extending from the hall to Callowhill Street, Larson's plan would introduce the idea of a monumental mall as opposed to the previous designs for one half of a block.²² It is this transition of scope that would inform the Mall suggested by the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 1946, the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission was authorized by Congress to plan for the area surrounding Independence Hall and the buildings adjacent to it. Judge Edwin O. Lewis was the chair of the Commission and after over a year of discussion and research, the Commission recommended to the National Park Service and Congress that a national park be established in the area surrounding Independence Square. In 1948, the House of Representatives and the Senate signed the park into existence with Bills H.R. 5053 and S. 2080 respectively.²³ The purpose of Independence National Historical Park, as outlined by the Shrines Commission and put forth in the legislation by Congress was to preserve:

²² Caflan, "Framing Independence Hall," 64.

²³ Constance M. Greiff, *Independence: The Creation of a National Park* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 49-50, 59-68.

...for the benefit of the American people as a national historical park certain historical structures and properties of outstanding national significance...associated with the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States.²⁴

While the restoration of Independence Hall had gained popular support following Lafayette's visit in 1824, and plans to venerate and memorialize the collection of buildings on Independence Square had begun in 1915 as is described above, it was not until this legislative mandate that real action began to take place. Initially the scope of the park as prescribed by the 1948 bill was limited to the three blocks east of Independence Square as well as the Square itself. This area included such properties as the First and Second Banks of the United States, Carpenters Hall, and the Merchants Exchange building in addition to the buildings on Independence Square. Separate from the federal legislation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia reached an agreement to develop the three city blocks north of Independence Square as a state park in 1949. These three blocks that were to become Independence Mall were funded through monies appropriated directly from the state in combination with funds from the commonwealth's Department of Highways. The funds from the Department of Highways would be used to develop Fifth and Sixth Streets, which are state highways, and portions of the mall itself.²⁵

²⁴ Independence National Historical Park, *Draft General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement: Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Independence National Historical Park, 1995), 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

The years immediately following the federal legislation for a national park of 1948 were used to draft agreements between the Department of the Interior and the City of Philadelphia concerning stewardship of the collection of buildings on Independence Square. The actions taken by the Department of the Interior during this period also involved acquiring the individual buildings to be included within the intended park, such as the First Bank of the United States and the site of Benjamin Franklin's home, and the property that surrounded them. The Commonwealth purchased the property on the site of Independence Mall during this period as well.²⁶ When land acquisition was complete in 1956, the city began the demolition of over one hundred nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings on the three blocks north of Independence Hall in preparation for the mall's construction. Dozens of other buildings from the same period were gradually razed by the National Park Service in the three blocks east of Independence Square in preparation for the national park. Casualties of this redevelopment included Frank Furness' Guarantee Trust Building (1875) [Figure 8] on Chestnut Street as well as the Penn Mutual Building (1850-1851) and the Jayne Building (1907) on South 3rd Street.²⁷ While the Park Service undertook this undefined program of demolition, members of the Park Service and other individuals associated with the park worked to draft a master plan. The prominent individuals involved included Charles Peterson, designated architect of the national park; Edward M. Riley, park historian; Judge Edwin O. Lewis, chair of the Shrines Commission and congressional lobbyist; and Conrad Wirth, assistant director and

²⁶ Greiff, *Independence*, 70-78.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 79-112.

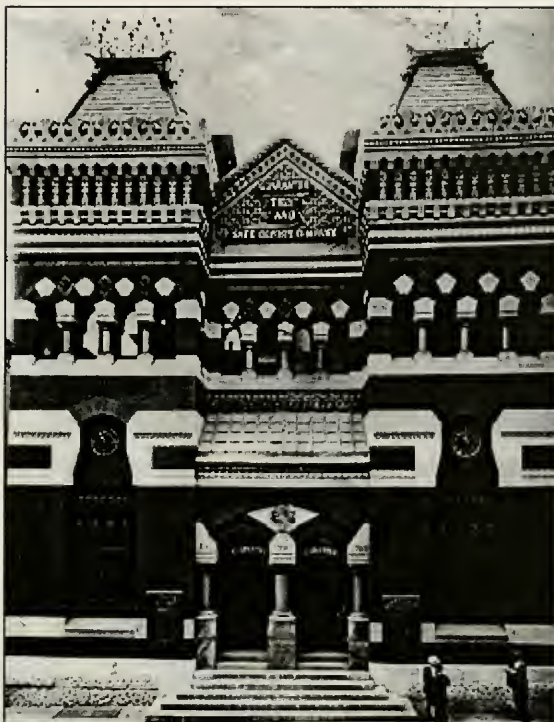


Figure 8: The Guarantee Trust Building (1875) by Frank Furness (1839-1912) located on the south side of Chestnut Street between South Third and South Fourth Streets.

later director of the Park Service. The endeavor would take over a decade and the resulting plan was necessary to lobby Congress to appropriate the necessary funds for implementation. The process was an effort to reconcile the differing opinions of what the park should be. While some, such as Peterson and Riley, attempted to retain a number of existing buildings to provide an accurate historical context for the park, the Shrines



Figure 9: The area that would become Independence Mall in 1950. Photo taken from the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Building.



Figure 10: Independence Mall in 1974. Photo taken from the Penn Mutual Tower by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates.

Commission called for a “raze and reforest” approach with a large proportion of lawns and gardens. The finished plan primarily reflected the latter approach. With the plan complete, the Park Service continued with demolition and construction, which were finally completed in 1969.²⁸ [Figure 9, 10]

After the completion of Independence Mall, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania made an arrangement for transference of the mall to the National Park Service. In 1968, before the original vision of the first master plan was fully completed, a new one was created to deal with the remainder of the park and to prepare for the approaching bicentennial. Largely, this new plan called for the completion of several projects that had been envisioned since the early years of the park. Projects such as these include the restoration and interpretation of Franklin Court by Venturi & Rauch and National Heritage Architects in 1976, the construction of a visitor’s center by Cambridge Seven, and the reconstruction of City Tavern, both completed in 1975.²⁹ One last concern faced the Park Service, which was the safest and most efficient location for the Liberty Bell. The decision to move it out of Independence Hall, where it had sat for over half a century, would ultimately result in the Liberty Bell Pavilion by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates.

²⁸ Greiff, *Independence*, 79-112.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 208-228.

CHAPTER III

Creation

Mitchell/Giurgola Associates

In late 1974, when the Liberty Bell Pavilion commission was awarded, Romaldo Giurgola and Ehrman Mitchell were the senior partners of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates, one of the country's leading architectural firms. Mitchell/Giurgola Associates was also, along with Venturi and Rauch, one of the most critically acclaimed firms in Philadelphia.

Romaldo Giurgola, born in Rome, Italy in 1920, was educated in Italy and received his Bachelor's Degree at the University of Rome in 1948. After earning his Master of Architecture degree at Columbia University, Giurgola taught architecture at Cornell University and later at the University of Pennsylvania under Louis I. Kahn.³⁰ His association with the University of Pennsylvania and Kahn would confirm his inclusion in the Philadelphia School of designers influenced by the principles of Kahn.

Ehrman Mitchell grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania before graduating summa cum laude from the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1958, Mitchell and Giurgola left Gilboy, Bellante and Clauss, the firm where they were working together at the time, and began their own firm based in Philadelphia.³¹ [Figure 11]

³⁰ Muriel Emmanuel, *Contemporary Architects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 285-287.

³¹ Andrea O. Dean, "Profile of the Firm Award Recipient: Mitchell/Giurgola," *American Institute of Architects Journal* 64, no. 4, (April 1976), 59.



Figure 11: Ehrman Mitchell (left) and Romaldo Giurgola (right) in 1976.

One of Mitchell/Giurgola's earliest projects originated from the National Park Service program called Mission 66. In 1955, Conrad Wirth, director of the National Park Service at the time, developed a program to make widespread improvements to the run-down national parks throughout the country. Approved in 1956, Wirth's program was dubbed Mission 66 in reference to both the projected date of the program's completion as well as the golden anniversary of the National Park Service; 1966. The plan focused primarily on an upgrade of the parks' facilities. In many cases this upgrade included the construction of new visitor centers. With the support of President Dwight Eisenhower and Congress, appropriations for the National Park Service increased by 200 percent over the next ten years and the Mission 66 program was underway.³²

³² Constance M. Greiff, *Independence: The Creation of a National Park* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 91.



Figure 12: Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center. View from the south.

During the 1950s and 1960s, both the Mission 66 effort and the National Park Service as a whole placed a significant degree of value on the quality of design in the national parks. Many of the commissions that came out of Mission 66 were awarded to both established and relatively unknown architects practicing modern design. The commission for the Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina was awarded to Mitchell/Giurgola Associates in 1959. [Figure 12]

Like many of the buildings constructed under the Mission 66 program, the visitor center is located in the center of the flat oceanfront plain where the Wright Brothers accomplished the first powered flight. The logic behind the central siting of many of the

Park Service buildings of this period was to locate the center of the visitors' experience directly on the resource. This approach resulted in buildings that both provided views of the park from the facility and attempted to reference the surroundings through exterior form. Both of these characteristics are evident in the Mitchell/Giurgola visitor center at Kill Devil Hills. Constructed largely of glass and poured-in-place concrete, the glass walls are punctuated with concrete piers that are bush hammered to provide texture. Flat concrete slabs at the foundation slightly elevate the building to improve sight lines from the building while slabs located at the top of the walls help to mediate light in the interior. The domed concrete shells that make up the roof allow further light into the building while also creating an exterior form that is attuned to the dunes that surround the site. A successful design, the building served to establish a relationship between Mitchell/Giurgola Associates and the Park Service that would become a factor over a decade later when the firm was awarded the Liberty Bell Pavilion.³³

The project that would bring Mitchell/Giurgola Associates national attention would be the competition for the National Headquarters of the American Institute of Architects in Washington, D.C. in 1964. The firm's submission won the competition with a design that was widely praised throughout the architectural community. However, the District of Columbia Fine Arts Commission rejected the design. Despite revising the design in 1967, the Commission again rejected the firm's submission based primarily on

³³ Ehrman B. Mitchell and Romaldo Giurgola, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 21.

a contentious intersection between the two wings. The project went unbuilt and the American Institute of Architects was highly criticized by those in the profession for agreeing with the stance of the Fine Arts Commission.³⁴

In 1966, Romaldo Giurgola was named chair of the Department of Architecture at Columbia University. Following this new position, the firm opened a second office in New York City.³⁵ Despite completing a number of buildings throughout the country and opening a new office in New York, at the time of the Liberty Bell Pavilion commission, Mitchell/Giurgola Associates had realized a majority of their designs in the Philadelphia region. One such commission was the United Fund Building, also known as the United Way Headquarters Building. [Figure 13] Located on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the building's site would inform many aspects of the design including lot configuration, surrounding buildings, and solar orientation. The trapezoidal site of the United Fund Building caused by the diagonal Parkway, led Giurgola, the firm's primary designer, to create a building with three primary facades. The treatment of each façade varied dependent on its relation to the sun. The north façade, which faced the cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul, was composed of a glass curtain wall. A similar treatment was used on the west façade to take advantage of the views of nearby Logan Circle, but on this façade a concrete screen was added to mediate the light of the western sun. The diagonal concrete

³⁴ Dean, "Profile of the Firm Award Recipient," 58.

³⁵ Ibid.



Figure 13: The United Way Headquarters Building. South Elevation.

bearing wall on the south side shielded the interior from direct southern exposure.³⁶ The diagonal character of the south wall was not only a response to the trapezoidal site and its orientation, but such an element was used often in the firm's work of this time for other reasons. Architectural critic Paul Goldberger described Giurgola's use of the diagonal element in 1975:

³⁶ Dean, "Profile of the Firm Award Recipient," 60.

The diagonal symbolizes its own order, by breaking from the grid, and the connection between two existing points, which it requires if it is to be perceived as a diagonal. It creates at the same time a place and a transition between places...³⁷

This prevalence of the diagonal in Giurgola's design, a hallmark of the Philadelphia School, would continue, serving as a significant element in the Liberty Bell Pavilion constructed four years after the United Way Headquarters.

The Columbus East High School in Columbus, Indiana, designed in 1973, was a significant commission for several reasons. [Figure 14] The building shows a continuation of certain elements from Giurgola's previous designs as well as new directions that would also be evident in the design of the Liberty Bell Pavilion. This design would garner the firm a Gold Medal Award from the American Institute of Architects and further increase the firm's national profile. The diagonals that play an important role in the Liberty Bell Pavilion are also represented in the diagonal interior walls of the Columbus high school. Unlike many of the firm's previous works, including the Wright Brothers Visitor Center and the United Fund Building, the absence of concrete as a primary design component is conspicuous. Utilizing aluminum panels and clay tile for a majority of the building's exterior, Giurgola's selection of materials is noted by Paul Goldberger as a "new direction for Mitchell/Giurgola's work."³⁸ This absence of concrete in favor of metal, glass, and paneling of a material other than concrete is a distinguishing element in the Liberty Bell Pavilion as well.

³⁷ Paul Goldberger, "Works of Mitchell/Giurgola," *Architecture + Urbanism*, n. 12 (1975), 122.

³⁸ Goldberger, "Works of Mitchell/Giurgola," 122.

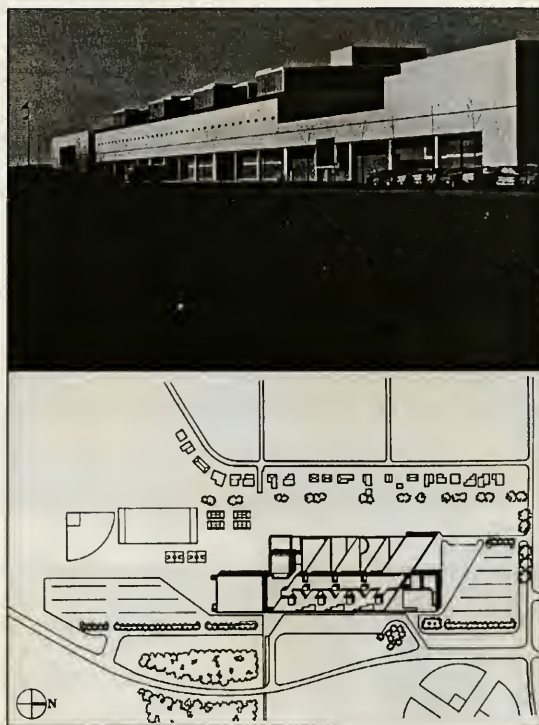


Figure 14: Columbus East High School. East Elevation and Site Plan.

Another building designed by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates that has a connection to the Liberty Bell Pavilion, both at the time of its construction and today, is the Penn Mutual Tower, built in 1974 while the design for the pavilion was underway. [Figure 1] Before the construction of the Mitchell/Giurgola tower, the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company Building, designed by Ernest J. Matthewson and built in 1933, stood alone at the southeast corner of South Sixth and Walnut Streets. Though the entrance of the

building was on axis with Independence Square and the hall to the north, the tower was located on the west side of the hall's steeple and created a lopsided backdrop to the axial view of Independence Hall from the mall. The addition of Mitchell/Giurgola's tower to the east provided a balanced skyline behind the hall. The building, though made primarily of concrete and glass, incorporated the historic façade of the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company Building by John Haviland (1830), architect of Eastern State Penitentiary, to preserve a semblance of the historic scale of the street frontage.³⁹ The Penn Mutual Tower would be an integral part of the view from the Liberty Bell Pavilion.

The Liberty Bell Pavilion Commission

Though it had been decided that it was necessary to move the Liberty Bell out of Independence Hall, a new pavilion on the Mall was not the only option considered by the Park Service and the City of Philadelphia. For a time, the new visitor center designed by the Cambridge Seven was to be the new home of the bell. The bell was to be placed at the base of the new bell tower. Several objections were raised for a variety of reasons. The bell would be exposed to the elements and vandals and the distance of over two blocks between the visitor center and Independence Hall would provide no sense of association between the hall and the Liberty Bell.⁴⁰ When it was announced that the bell would not be moved to the visitor center, the center's architect threatened to withhold drawings and stop work in protest of the decision stating that the bell tower needed a bell.

³⁹ Mitchell and Giurgola, *Mitchell/Giurgola Architects*, 76.

⁴⁰ Greiff, *Independence*, 212-218.

In an admirable act of diplomacy, the superintendent of Independence National Historical Park at the time, Hobart G. Cawood, persuaded the Queen of England to donate a bicentennial bell to the United States as a gift from the British people. The new bell would be placed in the visitor center's tower in the Liberty Bell's stead.⁴¹

However, the problem of the new location for the Liberty Bell was not solved and the situation was debated during much of 1972 and 1973 at meetings of the advisory commission for Independence National Historical Park. Aside from the visitor center, a possible location for the bell was the center of Independence Square. Judge Lewis was a strong proponent of a bombproof structure in the center of the square where the statue of Commodore Barry sat. Barry, the father of the U.S. Navy, was of Irish descent and objections by Irish members of the advisory commission as well as representatives of Philadelphia's Irish community rendered the site untenable due to political pressures. There was also concern that placing the bell in Independence Square would not draw visitors far enough away from the hall and into the rest of the park. Further debate and consultation between the commission, the Park Service, and Philadelphia mayor Frank Rizzo finally decided that the bell should be moved to the first block of the mall.⁴²

Though the decision of where the Liberty Bell would be located was made, one problem remained. The National Park Service did not own any of the land within the

⁴¹ John Q. Lawson, interview by author, Philadelphia, Pa., 22 January 2002.

⁴² Greiff, *Independence*, 228-229.

intended site of Independence Mall. Though it had been decided in 1973 that ownership of the mall would be transferred from the state to the federal government, the development bonds taken out by the commonwealth to fund the mall would not mature until the 1990s. However, an agreement was reached. Since a portion of the bonds had been paid, the state agreed to immediately deed a strip of land in the southernmost block of the mall to the Park Service. The rest of the mall would switch hands once the remainder of the bonds were paid.⁴³ However, even before the site for Liberty Bell's new home had been acquired, the Park Service focused on the process of selecting an architect.

While negotiations regarding the site were taking place, the Park Service began to request architects' proposals for the Liberty Bell Pavilion. With a projected budget of one million dollars for the pavilion, the Park Service was concerned that well-known architects would not be interested in a project of such small size. To remedy this situation, the Park Service enlarged the scope of the project to include a new maintenance facility at South Fifth and Manning Streets, which also had an anticipated project cost of one million dollars. Instead of searching for preliminary designs in the request for proposals, the Park Service requested what was primarily a fee proposal from the architects. In addition to a fee estimate, Mitchell/Giurgola Associates included a profile of the Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center as a description of the firm's prior

⁴³ Greiff, *Independence*, 229.

experience. There was a desire on the part of Hobart Cawood and Chester Brooks, the regional director for the Park Service, to hire a Philadelphia architect. No short list of selected architects was formulated, as is often done, but instead the commission was awarded to Mitchell/Giurgola in early 1974.⁴⁴

Mitchell/Giurgola would need to work quickly to meet an accelerated schedule outlined by the National Park Service. The Park Service hoped to have the pavilion complete and ready to receive the Liberty Bell by the start of the bicentennial year in January of 1976. The design team for the architect included Romaldo Giurgola as the project designer, John Q. Lawson as the project partner, and George Yu as the project architect.⁴⁵ The requirements for the project, as outlined by the Park Service, were the following: the pavilion should not compete with Independence Hall; the bell should be visible to the public at all times; the visitors inside the building should be able to touch the bell, and the design should incorporate a vestibule area to protect waiting visitors from the elements. Most importantly, the circulation should be designed to move large numbers of visitors through the building quickly and efficiently without taking away from the visitors' experience of the bell.⁴⁶ These program characteristics would be the defining elements of Romaldo Giurgola's design.

⁴⁴ Lawson, interview.

⁴⁵ Lawson, interview.

⁴⁶ Greiff, *Independence*, 230.

The Pavilion

The land for the site, a strip of land on the south side of Market Street that ran from South Fifth Street to South Sixth Street, had been acquired, but the specific site for the pavilion had not yet been determined. Mitchell/Giurgola's team considered several possible locations including each corner of the site as well as the final position on axis with Independence Hall. Dependent on the proposed location, the overall scheme of the pavilion design varied. At first, Giurgola considered the Liberty Bell as an object in the round that could sit in the center of a square room in any corner of the site. However, as the schematic design process continued, Giurgola realized that because of the bell's crack, the object did in fact have a front side and a back side and the scheme was changed to a linear approach, which was aligned with the axis of the mall and Independence Hall. This location also worked well with the tents that were located on the second block of the mall and the axial character of the mall as a whole.⁴⁷ [Figure 15]

The plan for the Liberty Bell Pavilion was designed to maximize circulation and a visitor's experience of the bell. The plan is comprised of three primary areas: a northern entry vestibule area, a narrow passageway, and the bell chamber to the south. [Figure 16] The building is surrounded on three sides, north, east, and west, by paved ramps to allow visitors to approach the building from any direction. The visitor's experience begins with entering the vestibule area from either the east or west entrance. The building entrances

⁴⁷ Lawson, interview.

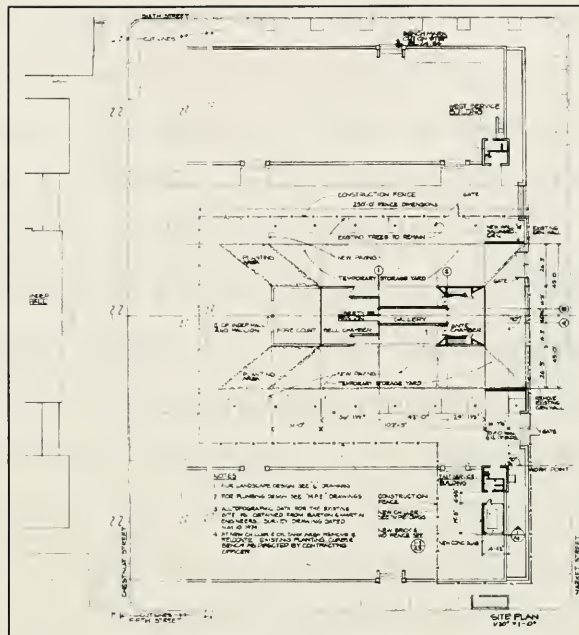


Figure 15: Liberty Bell Pavilion - Site Plan.

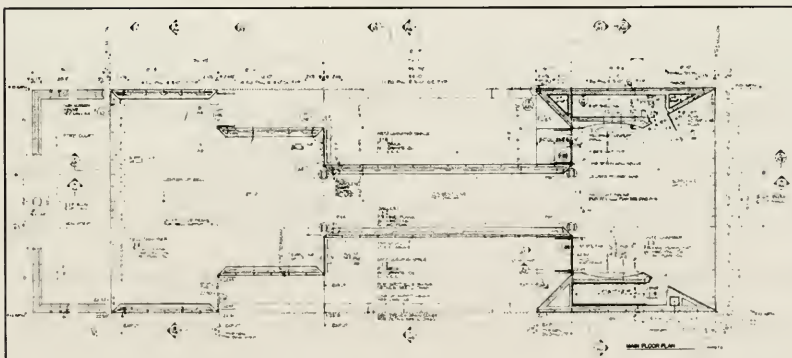


Figure 16: Liberty Bell Pavilion - Floor Plan.

are one instance where Romaldo Giurgola made use of the diagonals previously discussed. While the walls throughout the rest of the building are perpendicular in their relationship to the site and to each other, the walls at the entry are canted and through this unique condition direct visitors to the entrance without the use of signage. Designed to hold approximately thirty people as well as small exhibits, the vestibule is a relatively spacious area due to one of the building's primary design elements, a series of inverted triangular trusses that cantilever off of four columns set into the walls of the passageway. These trusses slope upward in the northern direction resulting in a comparatively high ceiling in the entry area. This sloping ceiling in the entry leads to a low ceiling in the narrow passageway that leads to the bell chamber. The dimensions of the passageway are intended to "quiet down" the crowd of visitors as they make their way towards the Liberty Bell.⁴⁸ As the visitors enter the bell chamber, which is the largest space in the building, the trusses and the ceiling slope upward to the south and provide a spacious area in which to experience the bell. The roof in this area slopes up as well to refer to Independence Hall to the south. [Figure 17] The hall serves as a backdrop to bell, which is positioned in the center of the chamber. After listening to a brief presentation by the Park Service staff, visitors then leave the building through an east or west exit, allowing the next group to enter the bell chamber from the passageway. For times when the pavilion is closed, the architect and the Park Service provided language centers on the exterior of the building. These centers, at the push of a button, would tell the story of the

⁴⁸ Lawson, interview.

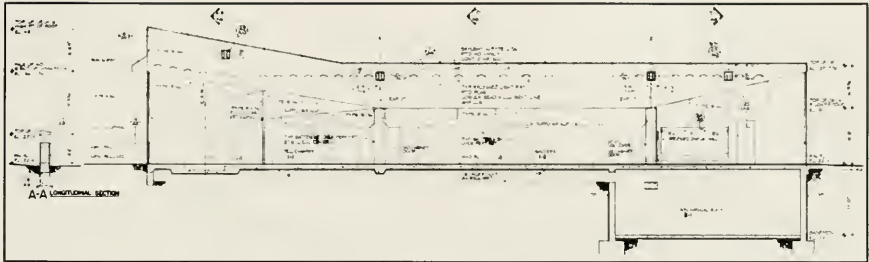


Figure 17: Liberty Bell Pavilion – Longitudinal Section.

Liberty Bell in the selected language for those who were not able to visit the pavilion during regular hours of operation.⁴⁹ The large proportion of glass employed in the design, in conjunction with interior lighting, also made the Liberty Bell itself visible to the public at night and at other times when the pavilion was closed.

One of the most noteworthy elements of the Liberty Bell Pavilion are the previously mentioned inverted triangular trusses. [Figure 18] Described by John Lawson as a reflection of the plan, the trusses define the variety of spatial events that visitors experience as they pass through the building.⁵⁰ Cantilevered from four steel columns, the structural integrity of the system required that Giurgola make a concession in regards the roof diaphragm. The designer originally intended that the skylight that runs down the center of the north/south axis of the building would be uninterrupted. However, the structural engineer, Tom Liedigh of Keast & Hood Co., required that a series of cross-ties

⁴⁹ Lawson, interview.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

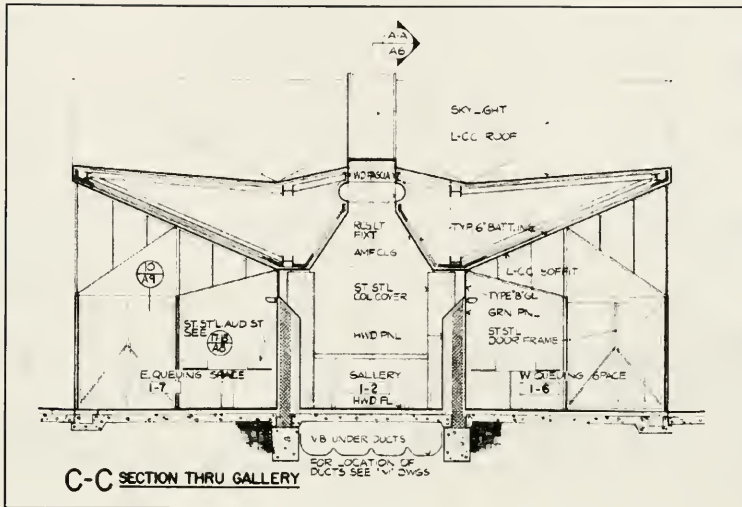


Figure 18: Liberty Bell Pavilion – Truss Section.

cut across the skylight to connect the two sets of trusses. This accomplished, the trusses allow the building to use glass in a majority of the exterior walls since the walls are not needed to support the structure. The large panes of glass at the north and south ends of the building are essentially hung from the roof eaves. Liedigh states that though this type of structural system would not be difficult to design with modern computer programs, at the time of the Liberty Bell Pavilion commission, the completion of the truss system required a significant amount of work.⁵¹ Another piece of the structural system that required considerable effort to design was the support for the bell itself. The architect wanted a minimal design that would not detract from the bell itself, but the support would

⁵¹ Tom Liedigh, telephone conversation with author, 11 March 2002.

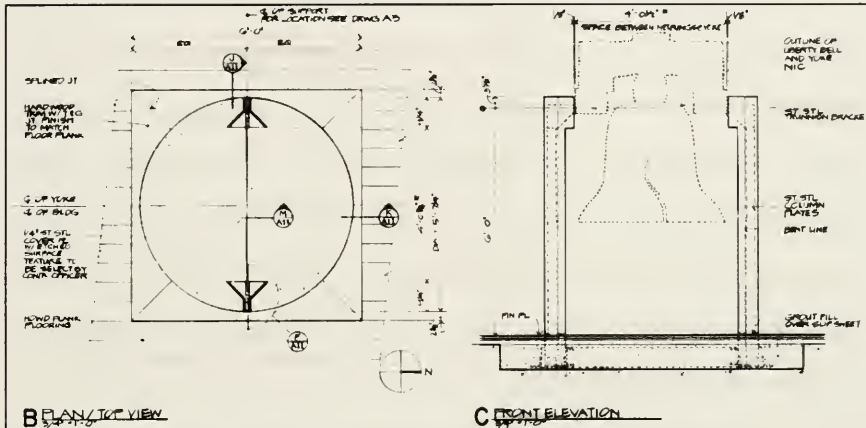


Figure 19: Liberty Bell Pavilion – Drawing of Liberty Bell Support.

have to be substantial enough to actually carry the one-ton bell. The project architect, George Yu, accomplished the task by using two square steel posts that were tied together by a steel beam below the level of the floor. It was upon these steel posts that the ends of the original black walnut yoke would rest.⁵² [Figure 19]

The materials used in the pavilion represents the broader palette used by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates in Columbus East High School. The materials were intended to relate to the more modern buildings on Fifth and Sixth Streets. Aside from the foundations, Giurgola did not use poured-in-place concrete, which is present in many of his previous designs. The primary materials are the glass in the exterior walls and the

⁵² Lawson, interview.

lead-coated copper roof. The southern and northern walls are composed entirely of very large panes of glass, which allow the public to see the bell when the pavilion itself is closed and also makes visible the backdrop of Independence Hall from within the bell chamber. The area south of the southern window wall was landscaped to encourage visitors to enter the pavilion rather than simply walking up to the glass. The landscaping was also intended to prevent people from standing at the glass and diminishing the opportunity for photographs taken by visitors of the Liberty Bell with Independence Hall in the background. Glass is also used for the entry and exit doors as well as the previously mentioned skylight. Where the walls of the building are solid, a glass clerestory was designed to separate the solid walls from the roof. The roof is made up of sections of lead-coated copper that are soldered together in a standing seam system. White granite paneling is the exterior cladding for the solid portions of the wall while vertical white oak slats are the cladding for the solid wall interior. The position of the solid walls are intended for dramatic effect and to further encourage the public to experience the bell from inside the building. Oak planks were also used for flooring throughout the pavilion. More standard materials were used for the Park Service's break area located in a basement accessible via a hidden stairwell in the vestibule area.⁵³

The interaction between the Park Service and Mitchell/Giurgola Associates during the design and construction process was an amicable one. The Park Service's in-

⁵³ Thomas A. Todd, *Mitchell/Giurgola Associates Architectural Drawings, 1963-1989*, Architectural Archives at the University of Pennsylvania.

Lawson, interview.

house architects reviewed designs and helpful suggestions were made, but overall the Park Service was very pleased with the design and suggested changes were minimal. Cawood felt the simplicity and low-key quality of the design enhanced the experience of the Liberty Bell without enshrining it. Though the entire process was accelerated, design was largely completed by the time that construction began in early 1975.⁵⁴

Funding for the pavilion was difficult to obtain, and after such an extended period of discussion concerning whether the bell should be moved and where it would be located, it was thought that a request for appropriations from Congress might reopen the debate. Instead of seeking congressional help, funding was requested from the Independence Hall Association, a committee of various Philadelphians involved with the development of the park since 1942. The Association had already donated \$500,000 for the reconstruction of the Graff House, where Jefferson had written the Declaration of Independence, but appropriations from Congress had already been acquired for that project. The head of the association, Arthur Kaufmann, agreed to allow the donated funds to be used for the pavilion, though the Association would still be credited for the Graff House project.⁵⁵ It had already been determined that funds would not be currently available for the intended Park Service Maintenance facility and that project was

⁵⁴ Lawson, interview.

⁵⁵ Greiff, *Independence*, 230-231.

postponed. Mitchell/Giurgola Associates would complete that design several years later and the building would be constructed in 1981.⁵⁶

With funding in place, construction began in the spring of 1975 and the pavilion was completed shortly before the intended celebration surrounding the move of the Liberty Bell on January 1, 1976. Hobart Cawood had planned an event that would be televised and would include bands and choruses of schoolchildren on the mall as the bell was moved to the new pavilion. However, the weather did not cooperate, and at the stroke of midnight, the Liberty Bell was brought out of Independence Hall on a dolly as heavy rains and winds drenched the ceremony. The bell proceeded down South Sixth Street to the pavilion where it was placed on the steel supports. Further celebration, including a poetry reading, took place and the bell was finally left in its new home.⁵⁷

The Liberty Bell Pavilion was the subject of mixed reviews after it was completed. The architectural profession largely praised the building. Though some said it was not Giurgola's best work, a majority of professionals admired the efficiency with which it served its purpose.⁵⁸ The fact that the pavilion did not draw attention away from the bell, but still provided a dramatic experience of the object, was also lauded. Despite this professional acclaim, the general media and a majority of the public did not

⁵⁶ Lawson, interview.

⁵⁷ Greiff, *Independence*, 231-232.

⁵⁸ Thomas Hine, "Bell's New Home Meant for Pilgrims," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 293, no. 184 (31 December 1975), 1B.

Lawson, interview.

appreciate the building. Comparisons to drive-in branch banks and subway stations were prevalent. The general public did not feel that the building was sufficiently dignified in relation to the relic that it housed.⁵⁹ However, such associations were not unexpected by the architect. On the contrary, one of Giurgola's goals in the design was for the building to be a familiar form to the public and to be without self-importance. Through this familiarity, the architect intended for people to feel at home and direct their focus on the Liberty Bell itself. John Lawson maintains that in many ways, the pavilion is a drive-through building. Because of the site and the large proportion of glass in the structure, one can drive along Market Street, look into the building, and see the bell before continuing on their way.⁶⁰

The Life of the Pavilion

As time passed, the pavilion's perception and physical appearance would undergo few changes. The public's perception of the building changed little over the period following the pavilion's construction. While it cannot be said that public disdain of the building was universal, in general, the pavilion never enjoyed widespread popularity. Calls for a new building to house the bell came as early as 1985, less than a decade after the pavilion's construction.⁶¹ Even many members of the architectural profession, who

⁵⁹ Larry Eichel, "Thousands See Liberty Bell in its New Home," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 294, no. 1 (2 January 1976), 1A-2A.

⁶⁰ David Morton, "Liberty Bell Pavilion," *Progressive Architecture* 57, no. 4, (1976), 65.
Lawson, interview.

⁶¹ Edwin Guthman, "Enshrine the Liberty Bell in a New and Better Home," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 312, no. 76 (17 March 1985), 6C.

praised the building at the time of its construction, gradually began to change their opinions of the pavilion as architectural tastes began to change. The Liberty Bell Pavilion was built in a modern mode that was near the end of its popularity in the late 1970s. As postmodernism became a popular approach, many buildings, including the pavilion, began to fall out of favor with architects around the country.⁶² With the profession as a whole no longer praising the building, the pavilion retained only a few individuals in the public and in the profession that still admired the design's many merits.

The building was designed to require very little maintenance and the architect succeeded in that aspect. One of the few physical changes made to the building was the installation of a solar veil on the south side of the pavilion in 1985. This element was added to address concerns by the Park Service in regards to the direct sunlight the bell was receiving. There was concern that the perceptible variation in the bell's temperature during the winter months would extend the crack. The necessity of such a shade was debatable. The primary impetus for such preventative measures was the accumulation of salts and other materials on the underside of the bell. Though the suspected cause was direct sunlight, John Lawson asserts that it is more likely that the deposits were caused by the evaporation and subsequent condensation of the cleansers used by the pavilion's custodial staff. Regardless of the cause, the veil was installed.⁶³ Another change in the

⁶² Lawson, interview.

⁶³ Tom Infield, "Winter Sun Might be Damaging the Liberty Bell," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 312, no. 72 (13 March 1985), 1A, 15A.

Lawson, interview.

building's construction that took place was the replacement of the glass panes on the north side of the building in 1988. The large windows were shattered after gunshots were fired at the pavilion from passing cars. When the Park Service sought to replace the glass, it was discovered that the west coast suppliers of the original windows had gone out of business. A replacement supplier was difficult to find and the cost of such replacement in kind was decided to be prohibitively expensive even if a manufacturer could be found. The Park Service instead chose to replace the two large panes with smaller ones and additional joints were incorporated into the design. Aside from these two minor changes, the pavilion has changed very little over the course of the building's existence.⁶⁴

The role of the Liberty Bell as a symbol of liberty in all its forms has drawn many people to the bell and the pavilion over the years as mentioned in the last chapter. Events at the pavilion have occurred so frequently that the Park Service has designated a portion of Independence Mall near the pavilion where demonstrations and protests can take place without disrupting the regular functions of the building and the park as a whole. In addition to the previously mentioned protest in 1994, there was a demonstration for gay rights that took place during a congressional visit to Independence Hall for the United States Constitution's bicentennial in 1987. This event called into question the designated

⁶⁴ Edward Collimore, "Making the Liberty Bell the Apple of Our Eyes Again," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 318, no. 50 (20 February 1988), 1B.

Lawson, interview.

space for protests since the allocated area was not near the delegates.⁶⁵ Currently, this issue is not entirely resolved. In 1985, there was also a march against apartheid and the Reagan administration that progressed up South Broad Street and culminated in a demonstration at the pavilion.⁶⁶ Demonstrations at the bell for various purposes often occur several times a year. These are but a few examples of the role that the bell and the pavilion have played in the last twenty-five years of the city's history.

The commission for a new home for the Liberty Bell for the bicentennial celebration did not result in a venerable shrine. What the commission did result in was a building that functioned very efficiently with very little maintenance and was a structure of its time in regards to architectural theory and style. Mitchell/Giurgola Associates designed the Liberty Bell Pavilion to meet or exceed all of the National Park Service's functional and aesthetic requirements and the building has continued to serve its purpose for over twenty-five years.

⁶⁵ Frederic N. Tulsy, "Goode Backs Protest at Bicentennial," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 317, no. 76 (3 July 1987), 3B.

⁶⁶ Steve Lopez, "300 March to Liberty Bell in Protest of Apartheid," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 312, no. 56 (25 August 1985), 6C.

CHAPTER IV

Destruction

In 1993, the National Park Service began a process that would produce a new plan for Independence National Historical Park. This plan would not only entirely remake Independence Mall in accordance with new design principles, but also result in the planned demolition of the Liberty Bell Pavilion by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates and the construction of a new Liberty Bell Center.

The Master Plan for Independence National Historical Park

Approximately every two decades or so, it is common for parks in the National Park system to create a new management plan in which the future of the park is planned. In 1993, the Park Service and Independence National Historical Park began to develop what was called a General Management Plan.⁶⁷ The last plan for the park had been created in 1971 in preparation for the nation's bicentennial. According to the Park Service, the necessity of a new plan was based on the changes to the park that had occurred since 1971 such as the completion of the Cambridge Seven visitor center and Mitchell/Giurgola maintenance facility, the addition of Independence Mall to the park boundaries, and increased public visitation. In addition to these physical changes, the

⁶⁷ David Hollenberg, interview by author, Philadelphia, Pa., 20 February 2002.

park cited that needs of both park employees and the general public had changed.⁶⁸ Though it is not stated in the management plan, another reason for the creation of a new plan was the failure of Independence Mall as a public space. Though the first block of the mall was fairly successful in regards to the amount of visitation due to the presence of the Liberty Bell, the second block had been stripped of its original architectural elements during previous work on the subterranean parking lot and was little used. Further, the third block of the mall was only used by vagrants and had become a place that was avoided by the public.⁶⁹

The purpose of the new plan, according to the document itself, was to “provide a vision and management objectives for the entire park.”⁷⁰ The draft version of the plan included a number of different alternatives that the park was considering. The alternatives ranged from a “no action” approach to the park as well as five other alternatives that encompassed varying degrees of change to the park. The preferred alternative, Alternative E, included a new visitor center and educational center to be built on the second block of the mall as well as the construction of a new Constitution Center and additional Park Service facilities on the third block. The plans regarding the Liberty Bell Pavilion were to include either an expansion of the existing pavilion or the

⁶⁸ Independence National Historical Park, *Draft General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement: Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Independence National Historical Park, 1995), 3.

⁶⁹ Mubarak S. Dahir, “The Politics of a Public Space,” *Preservation* 48, no.5 (1996), 30.

⁷⁰ Independence National Historical Park, *General Management Plan*, (Philadelphia: Independence National Historical Park, 1997), iii.

construction of a new building to house the bell. After two years of discussion, the plan was submitted in draft form to the public in conjunction with an environmental impact statement in August 1995.⁷¹

Initial public reaction to the draft management plan was well received for the most part, however the design and planning community took issue with the absence of any real design plans or guidelines for the park. Though this draft was intended to be a management plan and not a master plan that directly addressed the physical elements of the park, the Park Service then began to develop a set of design guidelines. At this time, the Pew Charitable Trust stepped forward as a primary donor of funds for the new visitor center. Though the Trust had donated funds for other organizations to build new structures in the past, in this case the Trust had decided to take on the role of client as a part of the Independence Park Institute, a local organization of which the Trust was a leading member. With no guidelines in place for the mall, the Pew Trust, at the encouragement of the Park Service, decided to retain an architect or planner to perform what was essentially a feasibility study for the visitor center.⁷²

The Trust hired Venturi Scott Brown and Associates (VSBA) in 1996 to look at ideas for the visitor center. During this preliminary study, VSBA also looked at the mall as a whole. The resulting plan for the mall and the visitor center varied from the existing

⁷¹ INHP, *Draft General Management Plan*, iii, 80-88.

⁷² Hollenberg, interview.

mall in a number of ways. The primary insight of the VSBA plan was that the imposed symmetry of the existing mall was not necessarily essential and might in fact take away from the presence of Independence Hall. It was argued by the architects that the relatively small scale of Independence Hall could not command such a dominant axial space as was intended, but in fact was dwarfed by it. VSBA attempted to solve this problem by placing the visitor center along the south side of Market Street, where the Liberty Bell Pavilion sits. This closed the axis at the end of the first block.⁷³ In further reference to the scale of Independence Hall, the architect suggested that the scale of buildings on the mall should only increase in height as their location moved northward on the mall and away from Independence Hall. The result would be buildings of a more modest height nearest the hall and buildings of greater height and scale on the second and third blocks of the mall. The ultimate height would be determined by sightlines to and from the hall. Another realization made by VSBA involved the original grid plan of the city. The architect pointed out the democratic and egalitarian quality of William Penn's original plan for Philadelphia that was reflected in how site prominence was determined more by a building and its function rather than its location. The mall as it was originally designed, with a strong axis that stretched over three blocks, did little to recognize this grid plan.⁷⁴ The VSBA plan, through the introduction of buildings onto the mall that occupied a large degree of street frontage, attempted to reinforce the original grid plan as

⁷³ George L. Caflan, Jr., "Framing Independence Hall," *Places* 13, no. 3 (2000), 66-67

⁷⁴ Stanislaus von Moos, "Penn's Shadow," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999), 50.

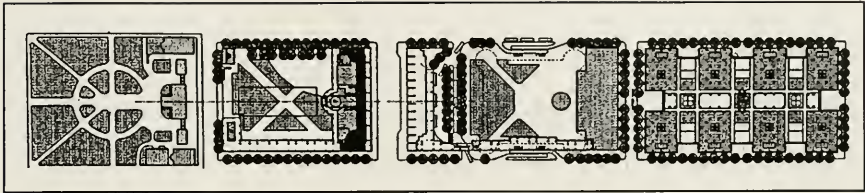


Figure 20: Venturi Scott Brown Associates Master Plan for Independence Mall from Visitor Center Feasibility Study.

well as the historic context of Independence Hall. [Figure 20] Upon completion, the plan for the mall and the visitor center was submitted.

The Pew Trust and the Park Service rejected the VSBA plan.⁷⁵ Both felt that the location of the visitor center on the first block of the mall was too near Independence Hall and that a site on the second block would be more favorable. There was also concern on the part of the Park Service that while the axis of the mall should be mitigated in some fashion, it should not be minimized to the degree suggested by VSBA.⁷⁶ Though the specific design recommendations included in the plan were thrown out, the Park Service did include several of the plan's insights into what would become the design guidelines for the park. In regards to the view that the strong symmetry of the mall minimized the presence of Independence Hall, the Park Service recognized the situation as well as the fact that the conditions of the Fifth Street side of the mall differed from what existed on Sixth Street.

⁷⁵ Hollenberg, interview.

⁷⁶ Caflan, "Framing Independence Hall," 67-68.

The result was an acceptance of asymmetry as an acceptable design for the mall.⁷⁷ The relative scale of the buildings on the mall suggested by VSBA was also incorporated in the design guidelines, primarily as a mechanism to preserve the sightlines from Independence Hall. The guidelines would also call for an acknowledgment of the grid plan that “fosters a community of structures while suggesting choice and freedom to those moving within it.”⁷⁸ The original plan of the mall, through its arrangement of landscaping and pedestrian walkways, very much separated the mall from Fifth and Sixth Streets and the mall’s surrounding urban context. This guideline was intended to facilitate the restoration of the urban streetscape along Sixth Street and to reconnect the mall with the surrounding city. With the inclusion of these and other design guidelines regarding materials and construction, the general management plan was completed in April 1997.⁷⁹

The Park Service understood that despite the inclusion of design elements in the management plan, donors for the remaining buildings planned for the mall would need a more specific plan before agreeing to administer funds for the individual projects. Following this logic, for six months prior to the completion of the management plan, the Park Service began the process of hiring a professional to complete a master plan for the mall. It was at this time that the park hired the Olin Partnership. Contingent upon being awarded the commission, Laurie Olin accepted the design guidelines as outlined in the

⁷⁷ Hollenberg, interview

⁷⁸ INHP, *General Management Plan*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ Hollenberg, interview.

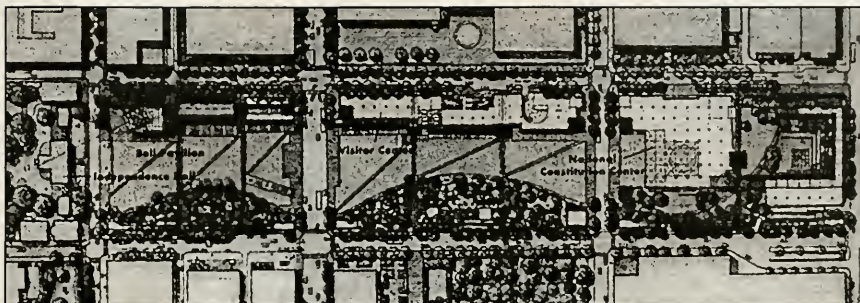


Figure 21: Olin Partnership Master Plan for Independence Mall.

management plan. Working in conjunction with Bohlin Cywinski Jackson as project architects, Olin designed a plan that attempted to meet all of the requirements outlined in the management plan.⁸⁰ [Figure 21]

The new plan for Independence Mall incorporated a variety of elements that served to meet the objectives of the Park Service. As was suggested by the management plan, the overall plan of the mall was asymmetrical, but maintained an axis culminating with Independence Hall. The plan attempted to address the different street conditions by placing a majority of the new buildings on the west side of the mall to provide a dense street front along Sixth Street. A series of substantial plantings would provide a swath of green space along Fifth Street. This dense landscaping was also intended to help balance the buildings on the west side of the mall. Open green space of varying widths would extend down the middle of the mall from Independence Hall to the new Constitution

⁸⁰ Hollenberg, interview.

Center on the third block. In accordance with the design guideline that addressed acknowledgement of the original city grid, Olin reestablished the series of small streets and alleys that had existed before the construction of the mall. These lanes were to be marked by pedestrian pathways that would help to reduce the scale of the blocks as well as reconnect the mall to the city both practically and symbolically. Though the architects of the individual buildings had not then been selected, the Park Service assigned the Olin Partnership the task of outlining the mass, height and general footprint of the buildings.⁸¹ One factor that informed the location of what was to be the new Liberty Bell Center was discovered on a site visit. Olin and Bernard Cywinski realized that only when Independence Hall was viewed from the corner of South Sixth and Chestnut Streets could the spire of the hall be seen against what they called the “eighteenth century sky.”⁸² This informed the new location of the Liberty Bell, which allowed a direct connection between the bell and the hall both visually as well as through proximity.

The Evaluation of the Liberty Bell Pavilion

During the creation of the master plan, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ) began to consider options regarding the continued use of Mitchell/Giurgola’s Liberty Bell Pavilion. Though the pavilion served the purpose for which it was built very well, the view of what the visitor experience of the bell should entail had changed in the intervening decades. The primary problems with the function of the pavilion stemmed

⁸¹ Laurie Olin, “Giving Form to a Creation Story: The Remaking of Independence Mall,” *Places* 13, no. 3 (2000), 56-59.

⁸² Bernard Cywinski, telephone conversation with the author, 2 February 2002.

primarily from the building's small size. The pavilion's three primary spaces were intended to accommodate roughly one hundred people. However, lines of visitors to see the Liberty Bell often exceeded this number. [Figure 22] Therefore, the additional visitors who could not enter the pavilion immediately were required to wait outside of the building. In poor weather conditions such as rain, cold, or excessive heat, this wait was very uncomfortable. Aside from the comfort of the public, the visitor experience within the pavilion was thought to be insufficient as well. The experience in the bell chamber itself was influenced primarily through the speech given by the park staff. The Park Service felt that visitors did not feel welcome to stay in the bell chamber once the speech was finished. There was also concern that the public also felt obligated to stay for the



Figure 22: Line of visitors extending from the Liberty Bell Pavilion to the southwest corner of Market and Fifth Streets in 2002.

entire length of the speech out of respect for the speaker regardless of their interest. Another aspect of the experience that was extensively debated by those in the Park Service was the desire to allow the public to experience the Liberty Bell in silence, with all interpretive exhibits or narratives to take place before the visitor viewed the bell, which was not an option in the existing pavilion. The Park Service also felt a need to introduce exhibits regarding the bell's history, to broaden the story told to public. The park possessed a number of artifacts and documents pertaining to the Liberty Bell that could result in what the Park Service felt was a much more interesting and in-depth story regarding the role of the bell in history as both a utilitarian object and symbol. However, there was no room in the existing pavilion to hold such displays. The Park Service, with the introduction of four new buildings onto the mall, felt that they were creating an ensemble on the mall that would hold visitors in the park for a day if not more. It was believed that the fifteen-minute experience of the Liberty Bell Pavilion did not fit in with this plan. Though the building met the requirements of the 1970s, the bicentennial, and forty million visitors when it was the only building on the mall, the Park Service felt it was no longer sufficient in its current configuration.⁸³

In addition to the functional inadequacies outlined by the Park Service, there were conflicts with the new master plan and the siting of the pavilion. It had been determined that not only was an asymmetrical plan of the mall acceptable, but preferable. In

⁸³ Hollenberg, interview.

addition, the pavilion's location obscured the views of Independence Hall from Market Street and the second and third blocks of the mall. Further, the axial view from the pavilion of the hall was considered less than satisfactory. The backdrop of the Penn Mutual buildings on Walnut Street detracted from the presence of the hall. This factor gained importance once the view from the corner of South Sixth and Chestnut Streets was discovered.⁸⁴ The sum of these factors made the axial location of the pavilion a problem.

Though the general management plan by the Park Service indicated that an expansion of the Liberty Bell Pavilion was an option, BCJ determined that due to the structure, materials, and siting of the pavilion, expansion or modification was not a viable option for the building or for the park as a whole. Not only was a renovation of the pavilion eschewed, but the possibility of moving the pavilion was also considered prohibitively difficult and expensive for similar reasons. The specific factors inhibiting a move of the pavilion will be further discussed in the next chapter. Due to this assessment of the Liberty Bell Pavilion, in addition to the fact that the building had virtually no constituency of supporters to speak out on its behalf, it was decided by the Park Service that the building would be demolished. A new structure that suited the new asymmetrical plan and took advantage of the oblique view of Independence Hall would be built on the first block of the mall.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Olin, "Giving Form to a Creation Story," 54, 57.

⁸⁵ Hollenberg, interview.

The Liberty Bell Center

In the spring of 1998, the Park Service issued a request for qualifications in regards to the new home of the Liberty Bell. From a number of submittals, the park narrowed the field to a few select firms including Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, collaborator with the Olin Partnership on the new master plan for Independence Mall, MGA Partners, the successor firm to Mitchell/Giurgola Associates, and Venturi Scott Brown Associates, previously hired to work on the visitor center feasibility study. After an interview process where candidates related their approaches to the proposed program of the new pavilion, now called the Liberty Bell Center, the Park Service selected Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. Founded in Pittsburgh in 1965, BCJ has a number of offices throughout Pennsylvania and the country including a main office in Philadelphia.⁸⁶

The site for the new center occupies approximately the western third of the first block of the mall. The bell chamber is located on the corner of South Sixth and Chestnut Streets and is angled to take advantage of the view of Independence Hall's spire. The remainder of the building and the site extend north to Market Street from that point. The program of the new Center is composed of three primary parts: the bell chamber, an exhibition space, and a covered outdoor space. [Figure 23] There will also be a number of meeting rooms adjacent to the exhibition space to accommodate visiting schools and groups of foreign tourists.

⁸⁶ Cywinski, interview.

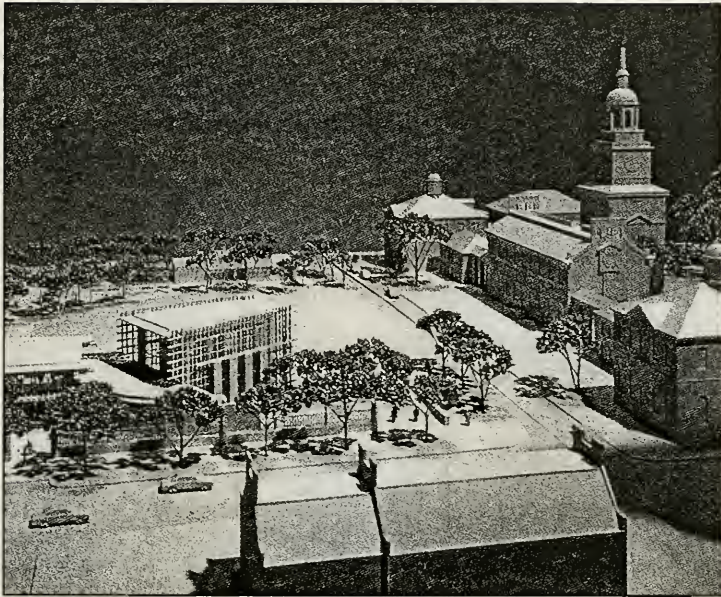


Figure 23: Site model of the bell chamber of the Liberty Bell Center.

The bell chamber will contain only the bell. The thirty-foot high southeastern wall of the bell chamber is composed of a single pane of mullion-less glass. Since one of the program elements prescribed that no natural sunlight should fall on the bell, the exterior walls and roof diaphragm extend well past the glass wall to provide shade at all times. The bell itself will be arranged to allow visitors to view the bell from all sides. Unlike the pavilion, which viewed the bell as a linear object with a front and back, Bernard Cywinski, the project designer, views the bell as an object in-the-round and has flanked the bell chamber with two curved partial-height marble walls. Though the bell

will be displayed at roughly the same height as in the pavilion, the plan profile of the building ramps up from the entrance to the bell chamber to slightly elevate the visitor from the ground plane. This elevation is intended to allow for a better opportunity for photographs by raising the visitors above the foot traffic along Chestnut Street.⁸⁷

The exhibition space of the new center has a number of alcoves for exhibits. The size of the alcoves are defined by the spacing of the structural brick and aluminum piers of the space's eastern wall in conjunction with freestanding partitions. The space between the piers will be primarily filled with glass windows. The piers as well as an aluminum trellis will be located both indoors and outdoors with the appearance of piercing through the exterior wall. A glass clerestory will be located above the trellis. The exterior portion of this trellis will be fully landscaped and is intended to connect the building to both the landscaped lawn of the first block as well as to relate the center to the other buildings on the mall, which have a similar feature.⁸⁸

The porch on the northern end of the Liberty Bell Center is forty-feet high and covered by the building's roof, which extends past the exterior wall and is supported by two bays of structural piers. It provides shelter over the entrance of the building as well as visitors waiting outdoors. The space also provides areas for exhibits. North of the porch entrance is a garden with benches that is intended to provide a public space that

⁸⁷ Cywinski, telephone conversation.

⁸⁸ Hollenberg, interview.

further connects the mall to the surrounding city. An undulating eight-foot wall of granite runs from the northern end of the center to the southern end and is designed to tie all of the spaces of the center together. The wall is also intended to provide exhibit space in the outdoor area as well as to serve as a circulation element in the exhibit space. Positioned opposite of the exhibit alcoves, visitors who wish to walk directly through the exhibit space to the bell can follow the wall into the bell chamber. The granite wall then directs visitors out of the building at the corner of South Sixth and Chestnut Streets.⁸⁹

During the design of the Liberty Bell Center, the Park Service began to perform archeological investigations of the proposed site. Because the three blocks between Fifth and Sixth Streets had been the location of over one hundred commercial and residential buildings before the widespread clearance that had created Independence Mall, the Park Service realized that the potential for the presence of artifacts below grade was high. Building foundations as well as artifacts, including ceramics and pottery, were found; many were removed with the intention that they would be incorporated into an exhibit in the new center.⁹⁰ The new building was designed to extend not more than a few feet below grade. Only one space, which is to hold some of the mechanical systems, reaches a significant distance below grade at approximately eight feet. A majority of the artifacts discovered during the excavation will not be disturbed by the Liberty Bell Center and will

⁸⁹ Cywinski, telephone conversation.
Hollenberg, interview.

⁹⁰ Hollenberg, interview.

be covered and left in situ.⁹¹ However, one artifact that has been unearthed has raised a controversy in regards to the Park Service's treatment of the site.

At the time that design of the center began, it was known that Presidents George Washington and John Adams had lived in a house, known as the Robert Morris House, near the southeast corner of Market and Sixth Streets during the period that Philadelphia served as America's capitol from 1790 through 1800. What was not known when design began was the exact location of the site. During the archeological investigations of the site, the brick foundations of an octagonal icehouse, a type of structure Washington is known to have used at Mount Vernon, were uncovered. By the time that design of the center was complete, independent historians and researchers had determined the location and footprint of the residence. Despite objections by historians, the Park Service decided to cover the icehouse where it was and mark the location with an interpretive plaque since altering the completed Liberty Bell Center design to incorporate the site of the residence would be costly.⁹² Since that time, current research has revealed that Washington had the icehouse as well as a slave quarters added to the rear of the house. [Figure 24] Documentation indicates that despite Pennsylvania laws against slavery, out-of-state visitors were allowed to bring their slaves with them. Further research has revealed that at least two of the slaves that Washington brought from Mount Vernon escaped while in Philadelphia. The result of this research is that now historians have

⁹¹ Cywinski, telephone conversation.

⁹² Hollenberg, interview.

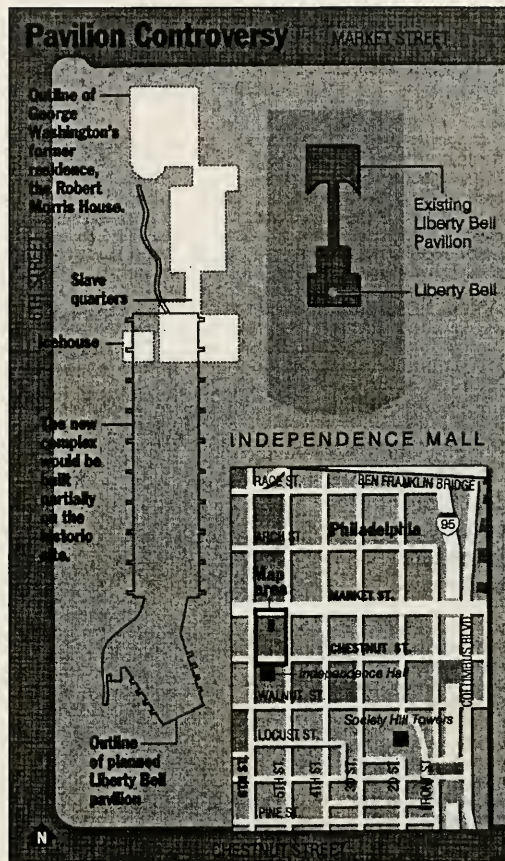


Figure 24: Footprint of presidential residence in relation to the existing Liberty Bell Pavilion and the proposed Liberty Bell Center.

joined with representatives of the African-American community to lobby the Park Service for a revised design for the center that reflects the history of the site.⁹³ Whether this debate will result in a delay of construction is uncertain at this time.

⁹³ Stephan Salisbury and Inga Saffron, "Echoes of Slavery at Liberty Bell Site," *Philadelphia Inquirer* 346, no. 297 (24 March 2002), A1, A20.

Archeological excavations are not the only reason that the construction of the Liberty Bell Center has been delayed. After the completion of design documents, the project was sent out for contractors' bids. When initial bids were submitted, the costs exceeded the Park Service's budget for the building and there were delays while the design was revised. Now that the design of the Liberty Bell Center is complete and within the Park Service's budget, construction is slated to begin in April 2002, barring any further delay. The projected completion date of the center is in May 2003. Because of the fragility of the bell, the Park Service intends to move it only once. The existing Liberty Bell Pavilion will remain open until the new center is complete. At that point, the bell will be moved from the pavilion to its new home in one night and be available for viewing the following day. Currently, there are no specific plans regarding the demolition of the vacated pavilion except that the building will be demolished shortly after the bell is moved.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Hollenberg, interview.

CHAPTER V

Uncertain Legacy

In 1997, the Park Service had decided that the Liberty Bell Pavilion by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates would be demolished after the completion of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's Liberty Bell Center and the transfer of the bell itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it was determined by BCJ that the pavilion could not be renovated or expanded to meet the current needs of the Park Service. One wonders if the conversion of the building to encompass a new visitor experience was the only alternative to demolition. Once the Liberty Bell Pavilion is gone, the legacy that the building will leave, both within the park and within the architectural profession, is uncertain.

The Possibilities

One alternative to demolition involves moving the building to a new location. Methods of moving the pavilion are essentially limited to two basic strategies: Lifting the building and moving it as a whole or dismantling the building to move the pavilion piece-by-piece to a new site.

Moving the pavilion as a whole would be difficult to accomplish. The entire building is supported on four steel columns. The columns support the inverted triangular trusses and, in turn, the glass walls are essentially hung from the roofline created by the trusses. The connections of the glass wall to the foundation are not substantial. Also, the

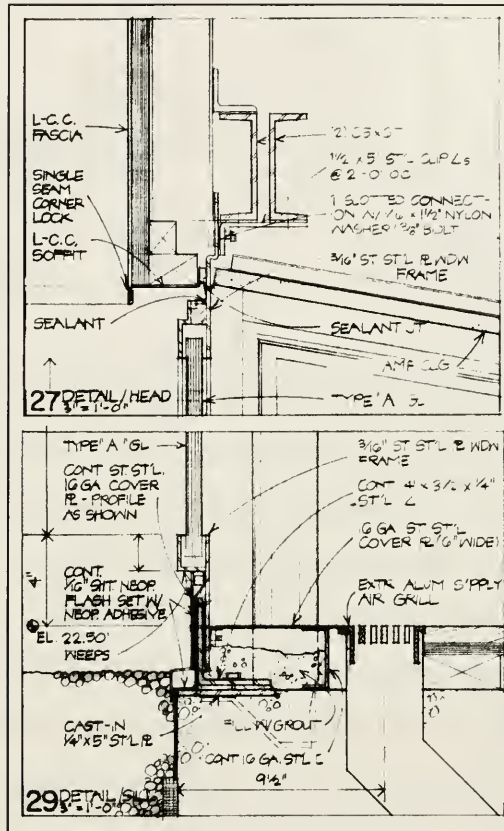


Figure 25: Liberty Bell Pavilion – Wall Section.

solid granite-clad walls are separated from the roof trusses by a band of clerestory windows. If the pavilion was lifted from its foundation, these windows could not structurally support the weight of the solid walls. [Figure 25] In addition to the cross-ties that connect the trusses, a great deal of the pavilion's structural integrity is derived

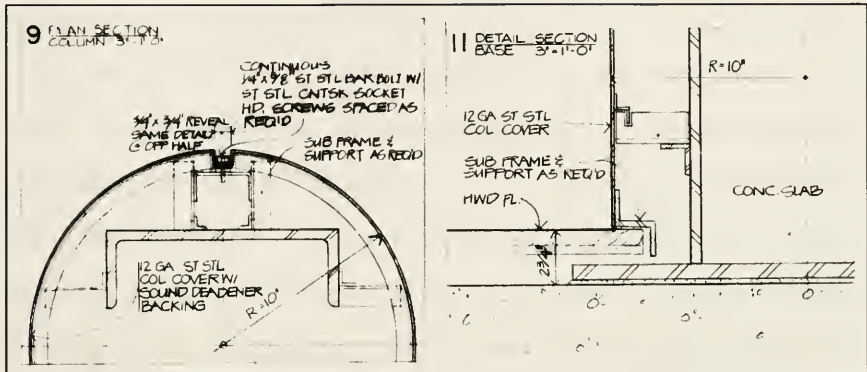


Figure 26: Liberty Bell Pavilion – Column Section and Column-to-Floor Connection.

from the rigid connection of the columns to the concrete foundation.⁹⁵ Disconnecting the pavilion's columns from the foundation to facilitate a move would destabilize the entire structure. The roof drainage system leads to downspouts within the columns that then direct the water out of the building at the base of the foundation. [Figure 26] This factor would therefore increase the difficulty of separating the columns from the foundation. Once freed of the foundation, the building's structural rigidity would be severely compromised and a successful move without damaging the building would be nearly impossible.⁹⁶

Lifting the entire building from the ground, including the concrete foundation, would be difficult logistically and not at all practical technically unless the building was

⁹⁵ Tom Liedigh, telephone conversation with author, 11 March 2002.

⁹⁶ Thomas A. Todd, *Mitchell/Giurgola Associates Architectural Drawings, 1963-1989*, Architectural Archives at the University of Pennsylvania.

Liedigh, telephone conversation.

only being moved a maximum of a few yards from its current location. Even if such a project were undertaken, there is not a suitable site within such close proximity to the pavilion's current location that would meet the guidelines of the new master plan for Independence Mall and would also be sensitive to the original design of the building.⁹⁷ Regardless of the method used to move the building as a whole, success is unlikely considering the complicated quality of the pavilion's construction. Because of the large proportion of glass in the building and the prevalence of delicate structural connections, the risk for damage to the building during the execution a move is high. A project involving the move of a masonry building often includes wrapping the building with steel straps. This provides additional support to the structure. Considering the prevalence of glass walls in the Liberty Bell Pavilion, this method of strengthening the structure during transport would not be possible.⁹⁸

Though the building would be difficult to move in its entirety, it might be possible to dismantle the building prior to moving it. The construction of the building, especially the materials, may allow for a careful dismantling process. Two issues concerning the construction of the building would be cause for concern however. The large panes of glass would need to be very carefully detached and removed from the site. As evident from past experiences, should a large pane be damaged, a replacement window would be expensive, if not impossible to replace. The granite panels used on the solid walls would

⁹⁷ Hollenberg, interview.

John Q. Lawson, interview by author, Philadelphia, Pa., 22 January 2002.

⁹⁸ Hollenberg, interview.

have to be handled with care as well to avoid damage and the need for expensive replacements. Aside from this need for caution in regards to the materials, another aspect of the building's construction would also need special consideration. The separate segments that comprise the lead-coated copper roof are soldered together to form a single roof membrane. The dismantlement of the roof would probably require cutting the lead-coated copper into sections which would be difficult to accomplish without tearing the copper at the solder points. If accomplished, the panels could then be re-soldered during reconstruction. Tom Liedigh, the structural engineer of the Liberty Bell Pavilion project in 1975, did outline one alternative to dismantling the roof. Liedigh thought it might be possible to move the roof structure as a single piece. With the glass and solid walls removed, he thought that the roof could be supported on several major beams and then lifted after the columns had been disconnected.⁹⁹ This would negate the need for altering the pattern of seams on the roof and reduce the danger of seriously damaging the lead-coated copper.

The primary deterrent to dismantling the pavilion and reconstructing it on another site is the expense of such a project. An anonymous party hired an architect to contact the Park Service on his behalf in regards to purchasing and dismantling the building. The identity of the client was never revealed and the proposed site for the pavilion's reconstruction was an undisclosed location in New Jersey. The Park Service agreed to

⁹⁹ Liedigh, telephone conversation.

sell the building to the buyer for a nominal fee on the condition that he provide funds to clear the site once the building had been removed. Though the Park Service has earmarked funds the building's demolition, site repair, and landscaping these funds would not be used in this situation and the project would aid the Park Service in reducing its own costs. Once the feasibility study was completed by the architect, it was estimated that dismantling the building and transporting it to the site in New Jersey would cost over one million dollars. Further funds would then be needed to reconstruct the pavilion as well as to prepare the new site to receive the building. This cost was either beyond what the buyer was willing to pay or could afford, and his interest in the project ended. Other parties showed an interest in moving the pavilion to different sites, but none of them chose to pursue the project due to the high costs.¹⁰⁰

Another factor to take into account when contemplating a move, by any method, of the Liberty Bell Pavilion is what site could be considered a suitable location for the building. The building was specifically designed for its site on the mall and for the object that it would hold. However, it is a possibility that the outstanding elements of the design that reflect the strong axis of Independence Mall and the relationship of the Liberty Bell to Independence Hall may be able to serve in a similar manner at another site. A characteristic of the building that lends some credibility a possible move are the pavilion's materials. Built primarily of metal and glass, the building only tangentially

¹⁰⁰ Hollenberg, interview.

refers to the buildings on Fifth and Sixth Streets. There was no intended connection between the pavilion's materials and those present in the group of buildings on Independence Square.¹⁰¹ Therefore, a connection between the materials of the pavilion and its surroundings is not necessarily of vital importance. The important factors to take into consideration when contemplating a new site for the pavilion are the strong axis of the building's plan, the implied relationship of the pavilion to another structure present in the slanted roof at what is now the south end, and the nature of the new site's surroundings and the object it holds given the large proportion of glass in the building's exterior.

Assuming that a suitable site for the pavilion was designated, another issue to consider would regard the new use for the structure. Without an object as unique as the Liberty Bell, the nature of the replacement object, if one was actually selected, would require careful deliberation not only in regards to the importance of the object, but in its size and shape as well. One proposed use for the pavilion involved housing one of the several replicas of the Liberty Bell that are located around the nation. One of the replica bells is located in Allentown, Pennsylvania and another in the Germantown area of Philadelphia. In fact, the owners of these particular bells approached the Park Service individually in regards to the possibility of purchasing the pavilion and moving it to allow the building to house one of the replicas. However, as related above, the cost of the

¹⁰¹ John Q. Lawson, interview by author, Philadelphia, Pa., 22 January 2002.

endeavor proved to be prohibitive.¹⁰² Aside from the replica bells, other objects could be housed in the pavilion. Though it may be difficult to identify an object of sufficient importance that would require its own structure, the possible secondary motive of putting the pavilion to use in order to prevent its demolition may allow for some leeway in that regard. Another potential use for the building, given its strength of form and line, is to allow the building to stand alone as an architectural sculpture. However, many involved with the building throughout its history, including project partner John Q. Lawson, are uncomfortable with objectifying a building that was specifically designed for a particular program.¹⁰³

A possible scenario that involves moving the pavilion to a new site and placing a new object within it involves the Philadelphia Museum of Art as a possible site. The Philadelphia Museum of Art (1919-1928) is located on a strong axis along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and provides the necessary axis and structure necessary for a site that is sensitive to the design elements of the Liberty Bell Pavilion. On the western side of the museum, a large stair leads down to an axial sculpture garden that terminates in a fountain and car roundabout. Beyond the fountain, there is a vacant strip of land that leads to a bank of the Schuylkill River. I suggest that it might be plausible for the pavilion to be relocated to the vacant strip of land after the car roundabout was removed and the area subsequently landscaped. This would create a continuous axis from the art

¹⁰² Hollenberg, interview.

¹⁰³ Lawson, interview.



Figure 27: View of the Philadelphia Museum of Art sculpture garden from the museum's western stair.



Figure 28: View of the Philadelphia Museum of Art sculpture garden from the Schuylkill River.

museum to the Liberty Bell Pavilion. [Figures 27 & 28] What is currently the building's south wall and the slanted roof above it would refer to the art museum with the fountain in the foreground while the other glass walls would provide views of the Schuylkill River and the historic Philadelphia Waterworks to the south and the river and Boathouse Row to the west. In regards to use, ideally the museum could select a fitting piece of sculpture to occupy the bell chamber. However, a suitable piece of sculpture for the building would need to be identified, security for the building and the artwork may be necessary, and funding for the move would need to be obtained. I propose this scenario as an example that serves to illustrate a possible alternative to demolition and takes into account the unique qualities of the pavilion. Though some may find this scenario plausible, many individuals, as stated above, do not believe that any other site would be suitable for such a specific design.

Other Examples

The Liberty Bell Pavilion by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates is not the only significant post-World War II building designed in the modern manner that is under the stewardship of the National Park Service. Like the pavilion, some of these buildings have been recently threatened with demolition. Two of these structures were constructed as part of the Park Service's Mission 66 program. They are the Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg of 1962 by Richard Neutra and the previously

mentioned Wright Brothers Memorial Visitor Center at Kill Devil Hills of 1960 by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates. [Figures 29 and 12]

The Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building is currently the subject of an ongoing and heated debate. The Park Service has planned the demolition of the building in the near future. Much like the Liberty Bell Pavilion, the Park Service has determined that the Cyclorama is not sufficient in meeting the current needs of the park and is difficult to maintain. However, the Cyclorama differs from the pavilion in that its location is at the center of one of the most emotionally charged places in the Park System, the site of the largest and arguably most significant battle of the Civil War. The Park Service emphasizes



Figure 29: The Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

the fact that the building is deficient. It does not have the capacity to serve the large numbers of visitors to the site, the cyclorama painting that it houses requires a more technologically advanced receptacle to ensure its preservation, and the desired method of interpreting the site is said to be hindered by the presence of the building on the battlefield.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the cost of moving the building would be prohibitively expensive and would remove it from the original site to which the design responds.¹⁰⁵

After plans of the impending demolition were made public, the building's constituents spoke out against the plans and called for the building to be saved. These constituents ranged from those intimately related to the building to Pritzker chairs and world-renowned architects, but very few members of the general public have joined the protest. When considering why the Cyclorama has caused such an outcry amongst those in the profession and the Liberty Bell Pavilion has not, two theories have been espoused. One view is based on the legacy of the respective architects. While Neutra was well known at the time of the Cyclorama commission and continued to garner praise for the remainder of his career, it is thought that Giurgola's career did not maintain the high-profile character that it possessed during the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, the significance of Neutra's works is more widely known.¹⁰⁶ The second theory is that while the plans for Independence Mall and the Liberty Bell Center are of high quality, there are

¹⁰⁴ Allen Freeman, "Unwelcome Centers: The Park Service Reevaluates its Modern Buildings from the 1960s," *Preservation* 49, no. 4 (1997), 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Longstreth, telephone conversation with the author, 1 February 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Longstreth, telephone conversation.

no significant plans for the buildings that will replace the Cyclorama. It seems that though individuals may not support the demolition of the pavilion, they are willing to accept it in anticipation of its replacement. However, no such consolation can currently be offered to the constituency of the Cyclorama.¹⁰⁷ For whatever reason, the prospect of saving either building is poor.

In the case of the Wright Brothers Visitor Center, it might be argued that this building benefited from the circumstances surrounding the plans for the Cyclorama. Similar to the other examples, the Wright Brothers building was deemed insufficient for current needs and options that included the building's demolition were considered. However, in the case of the Wright Brothers building, the opinions regarding the resource were less emotional than that of Gettysburg and the building itself is only located near the resource as opposed to being placed directly upon it. Therefore, members of the preservation and design communities, aware of the situation surrounding the Cyclorama, protested the planned demolition of the Wright Brothers building.¹⁰⁸ Funds were raised to cover a restoration of the building. In response to these factors, in addition to the building's designation as a National Historic Landmark in 2001, the Park Service relented. The statement of significance included in the landmark nomination identified the building as a significant example of the Mission 66 program and of the introduction of modern architecture into the national park system. The building is currently being

¹⁰⁷ Hollenberg,

¹⁰⁸ Freeman, "Unwelcome Centers," 16-17.

restored as an example of its architectural period. New uses will be introduced into the visitor center and additional buildings will be constructed to meet the remainder of the park's needs.

Despite differing outcomes, these two examples from the Mission 66 program and the Liberty Bell Pavilion have one common aspect: All of these significant Park Service buildings are or were threatened. Some may blame the National Park Service for acting as a poor steward for their significant buildings. It has been stated that, in comparison with the Park Service personnel that envisioned and realized the Mission 66 project, the current leaders of the Park Service do not truly value contemporary design of high quality. This view may be debatable due to the Park Service's employment of significant contemporary architects to design the new buildings for Independence Mall. All opposition to the treatment of buildings of this era has originated from within the design or preservation communities. There have been no grass roots movements to save these structures. In the case of the Cyclorama, the primary reason the profession's objections to the building's demolition have not succeeded is this lack of significant public support.¹⁰⁹

The public's lack of appreciation of buildings of this era is neither difficult to understand nor without precedent. It is possible that the modern mode of design, with a

¹⁰⁹ Longstreth, telephone conversation.

few buildings serving as notable exceptions, has not yet matured enough to gain broad acceptance by the public. Though the fifty-year limit required for a building to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places is arbitrary, it does seem to align itself with the period of time necessary for a significant structure to have social value attributed to it by the general public. For example, when three city blocks of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings were demolished in the 1950s, there was no significant outcry. However, if the same project were proposed today, not only would the design and preservation communities protest, but the public at large would likely voice their objections as well. The primary reason for this difference is that buildings from that period are now appreciated as contributing to the overall value of the city. Therefore, had the clearance of the mall and Independence National Historical Park taken place in the 1970s or 1980s, a time when Frank Furness' Academy of Fine Arts and University of Pennsylvania Library were being restored, buildings such as Furness' Guarantee Trust Building would have been preserved.¹¹⁰ Perhaps, despite the fact that buildings built in the modern manner may not yet be valued by a majority of the public, it is then the duty of the design and preservation communities to educate the public on the value of such structures in order to avoid significant losses that may be lamented in the future. How this edification can be achieved on the large scale falls outside of the scope of this work. However, perhaps the example provided by the current circumstances surrounding the Liberty Bell Pavilion, can be used to illustrate one method.

¹¹⁰ Longstreth, telephone conversation.

The Legacy

Unless a donor comes forward with the funds necessary to dismantle the Liberty Bell Pavilion and reconstruct it on a new site, the building will likely be demolished in the spring or summer of 2003. Since the building does not have the constituency to prevail upon the Park Service to preserve the building, perhaps it may be possible to formally recognize the significance of the building and commemorate its useful life.¹¹¹ Despite the best efforts of the preservation profession, every year significant buildings are lost to demolition or decay. Often these buildings are demolished with little fanfare and are largely forgotten by the public. If more attention were paid to buildings as they were razed, perhaps the building would not only be recognized for its significance, but the event would also raise awareness among the public and the profession in order to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

The idea of a function to celebrate the life of a building at the time of its demolition is not to suggest that buildings be given what would essentially amount to a funeral. Rather than a somber ceremony, perhaps an academic symposium open to the public would be a suitable vehicle for not only remembering the history of the building, but also for addressing the issues that led to its demolition and how they may apply to buildings in similar circumstances. The function may also serve to disseminate ideas, both old and new, to members of the profession regarding the education of the public

¹¹¹ Hollenberg, interview.

about endangered structures or objects. The primary purpose of the symposium would not be to prevent the demolition of the pavilion, but if such a function did lead to a temporary stay of demolition, it would be an excellent additional benefit. There is the possibility that an academic and public event such as a symposium may create a constituency for the building where one did not previously exist. The primary hope would be that by bringing the pavilion and its demolition to the attention of the public and the profession, those who do feel that the building's fate is unfortunate will be more willing to speak out in similar cases that occur in the future. The specific events associated with a Liberty Bell Pavilion Symposium could include lectures on a number of topics. A few examples of lecture topics might include the following: A profile of the firm history and significance of Mitchell/Giurgola Associates, a history of the Liberty Bell Pavilion and the Bicentennial in Philadelphia, an overview of the Mission 66 program both historically and through case studies of the Wright Brothers and Cyclorama buildings, and a professional panel on the political and economic issues that surround the preservation of buildings that do meet the National Register's fifty-year criteria. These are only a few possibilities for topics, but they serve to illustrate the focus of the symposium.

The Liberty Bell Pavilion by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates is a significant architectural example of a period in American architecture. The pavilion also represents a time when the National Park Service's approach to integrating modern architecture into

its parks differed from the organization's current way of thinking. The building is an excellent response to a specific site and program and the design's success is evident in its efficient use for almost thirty years. The chances of saving this building are slim. In addition, the desirability of the pavilion's move, necessary if the building is to avoid demolition, is questionable given the building's connection to the site and the object it holds. Such a move may compromise the integrity of the design and physically damage the building itself. If a move is decided to be objectionable or the necessary funds cannot be obtained, then all that can be salvaged is the Liberty Bell Pavilion's legacy as a successful design and as a lesson to be learned and applied to similar situations in the future.



Figure 30: Independence Mall in 2002. Note the Constitution Center, Judge Edwin O. Lewis Plaza, and Liberty Bell Center under construction. The completed Visitor Center is located on the second block of the mall.

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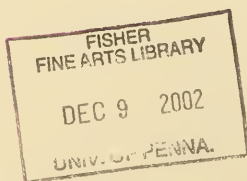
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